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# ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE  
FOURTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE

## **National Association of State Universities**

Held in Boston, October 8th-9th, 1909

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BY JACOB GOULD SCHURMAN, PRESIDENT OF  
THE ASSOCIATION

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Some Problems of Our Universities—State and  
Endowed.

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The present meeting of the National Association of State Universities has been convoked at this unusual time and still more unusual place to enable its members to attend on the same occasion the formal ceremonies of inaugurating Dr. Lowell as President of Harvard University. The members of the Association will, I am sure, recognize that their officers have acted with propriety in paying this compliment to the oldest and most famous of American universities.

The circumstances of the meeting naturally suggest a theme for your President's address. This is an association of *State* universities. Harvard is a privately endowed university, independent of State control. I propose, therefore, to consider some of the characteristics of state and privately endowed universities respectively and also some of the more urgent problems which press on them in common for solution at the present time. But there is a third group of universities—the denominational—about which something must be said at the outset.

## DENOMINATIONAL UNIVERSITIES.

Denominational institutions owe their existence and in the main their continued support to the enthusiasm, energy, and benevolence of religious sects by which with varying degrees of scholastic independence they are all in the last resort regulated and controlled. But the supreme object of the denomination does not coincide with the supreme object of the university, whose province is knowledge and whose method is the free, unfettered, and unbiased search after truth. The pursuit of this method, as the history of the progress of science and philosophy all too painfully demonstrates, has constantly brought the university into collision with the church whenever a new vista of truth was opened up or the narrow horizon of human knowledge pushed back a little into the realm of the unknown. As a consequence there has developed a clear recognition of the fact that the university cannot, without abandoning its own constitutive idea, be subject to any control whatever from the side of the church. Absolute independence is the supreme condition of intellectual activity. A denominational university, therefore, is, in a last analysis, a contradiction in terms. It could never flourish among a people like the French who push all premises to their logical conclusions and feel unhappy if the last obscure residuum of a complex conception is not dragged out of its hiding place and exhibited to the clear light of day. This is what makes government so difficult in France; for government is largely a matter of compromises. We Americans, on the other hand, succeed in government because among other things we have a genius for compromise. The same genius follows us—sometimes for good, often for evil—into other domains of life; and it undoubtedly accounts for the development amongst us of denominational universities, which early conditions in New England naturally called into existence. The denomination has supreme control over its university, but it has not pushed that control

to the extreme limit. And the denominational university has responded to this attitude of toleration by moderating its zeal in the discovery or dissemination of new truths in fields which had already been pre-empted by the dogmas of the church. Of course, in a world of universal compensations, the parties to this compromise have had to pay for it. And the price paid by the denominational university has been heavy enough.

#### GOVERNMENT OF STATE UNIVERSITIES.

The state supported universities are governed by boards of regents or curators or trustees, who are in some cases elected by the people and in others appointed by the governor of the state. I now proceed to inquire how this arrangement harmonizes with the idea of a university.

No one would pretend that the governing board of a state university is committed to any dogmas like the articles of faith of a religious denomination. Yet there are possibilities of oppression or restriction for the university which must not be overlooked. The people may elect, or the governor appoint, regents (or trustees) not only who belong to a particular political party, but because they belong to it. They may be all republicans or all democrats, or all of some other political stripe. I do not know that such a thing has ever actually occurred in any of the many states which now have state universities and in most of them it would be impossible. But I make the extreme supposition in order that we may clearly realize the force of the objection I am endeavoring to describe. Here then is a board of regents made up wholly of men who belong to one political party and because they belong to it. How will the idea of the university fare in the hands of such political partisans?

Before attempting to answer that question I must crave your indulgence while I describe another hypothetical situation. The university is not the only public institution supported by

the state. There are many others, including, for example, hospitals for the sick and asylums for the insane. These institutions are also controlled and administered by boards of managers, who are generally appointed by the governor of the state. Let us suppose now that the same practical considerations which led to the appointment of a republican or a democratic board of regents for the state university necessitated also the appointment of a republican or a democratic board of managers for the state insane asylum. How will these political partisans administer the trust and care for the unfortunate wards committed to them by the sovereign power of the state?

To ask such a question is to answer it. These men will perform their public duties like any other American citizens who might have been selected to undertake them. With one exception, of which I shall have more to say in a moment, the fact that the managers are all of one political party will make no difference in their administration of the asylum. Whether of one political party or more, or of no political party, the managers in any event will desire to conduct the public business committed to them with reasonable efficiency and economy. And the members of the board, however constituted, would always feel that this is what the public expected of them. Even a board composed entirely of members of one political party would not consciously and deliberately defy or ignore that expectation. But such a board is always exposed to one temptation which cannot arise in a board differently constituted. A board wholly republican or wholly democratic is pretty sure to select such officers or employees as it appoints from its own political camp and perhaps on the recommendations of political leaders; and the favoritism which leads to the appointment of such candidates is apt to protect them afterwards against the just and salutary penalties that should be inflicted for neglect of duty or incompetency in office. In



this way the administration of a state asylum may be seriously impaired, if the managers be entirely of one political party. And to some extent, this danger is imminent when a considerable majority of the managers are of the same political party. In the best administered asylums the danger is avoided by having all appointments in the hands of the superintendent and holding him responsible for the results.

### DANGER OF POLITICS.

This example enables us to measure the danger to which a state university may be exposed from a board of regents who are political partisans. The vital point is the matter of appointments. If the board on its own motion makes appointments, they will be made on political grounds or on other grounds foreign to the life and spirit of the university, and the institution might as well close its doors. It has a name to live, but it is dead. On the other hand, if the board acts only on nominations made by the president, and if before making nominations the president (who if he thinks of anything but the merits of the candidates profanes his high office) also consults and advises with the dean and members of the faculty who profess cognate branches of learning, then it would seem to matter little whether the members of the board of regents were all men of one political party or of none. The faculty is the university. And if its members are selected by their peers, and on the basis of ability and scholarly or scientific attainment and achievement, the life of the university goes on inviolate.

Or, rather, it would go on inviolate, if this governing board of political partisans did not choose to interfere at another point, where interference is at any rate conceivable. Here the analogy with the administration of the state insane asylum does not help us. For the managers of an asylum, however intense their own political convictions and sentiments, cannot conduct a propagandist campaign or make converts among the

insane. But a board of regents composed of political partisans might conceivably desire to use the university for such purposes. These ends are, however, so alien to the life and objects of the university that, as experience happily shows, even a partisan electorate would not tolerate the spectacle of such a shameful perversion of functions and aims. A board of regents which attempted it would be overwhelmed with obloquy and disgrace.

A board of political partisans might, however, with more prospect of success, interfere with the teaching of some professor whose views were opposed to their own political dogmas. The members of a republican board might resent free-trade teachings; and a sympathetic exposition and defence of socialism might bring down upon the head of the professor the oburgations of either republican or democratic regents. This danger is a very real and serious one in cases in which the members of the board reflect the views, sentiments, and prejudices of a large majority of the people of the state. A newspaper campaign is inaugurated (or, under the conditions, inaugurates itself) against the "heretical" professors, and they and their teachings are denounced from one end of the state to the other. When the legislature meets the matter is made a subject of legislative investigation. And it is inevitable that the fundamental relation between the university and the state should be thoroughly canvassed. At such a time legislators and voters too are likely to ask whether the state should vote public money, whether citizens should tax themselves to support an institution which is instilling into the minds of the picked young men and women of the rising generation ideas and theories utterly opposed to those which they and their fathers have long entertained and devoutly cherished and which they believe to be essential to the sound life of the body politic or even to the nobility of individual manhood. This is the supreme crisis for the state university. Freedom of thought, freedom of investigation, freedom of teaching, freedom of

publication,—this is the soul of a university. And dictation from the state is just as much tyranny as dictation from the church. Truth must judge itself; it cannot be determined by counting noses. One man with God is a majority. The professor must be left free to follow the dictates of reason and the demonstration of evidence even though his conclusions are at variance with the beliefs (or prejudices) which the mass of mankind regard as fundamental truth. And if a state university cannot ensure him that freedom, it is to that extent not a university at all. As in the denominational university the last word would be spoken not by the intellect but by some power outside it—by a board of trustees, by a legislature, or by a majority of the people of the state.

#### THE SUPREME TEST.

Like other institutions the state university is on trial. *The supreme test is whether the people of the state will on the one hand tax themselves to support it and on the other impose upon themselves a self-denying ordinance to leave it severely alone, so that it may select its own members by the application of its own intellectual standards and the members thus chosen may be absolutely free to investigate, to teach, and to publish whatever they believe to be the truth.* If our people do not already possess this conception of a university, they must be educated up to it. For a university cannot flourish on any other condition. I need scarcely point out that the general acceptance of this view would be greatly facilitated by the constant recollection on the part of the professors of the maxim that freedom implies obligation, and that in this instance the obligation imposed is that of self-restraint, along with the courtesy to be expected of gentlemen and that tact which mitigates or avoids the asperities of embarrassing circumstances.

I have spoken hitherto of denominational and state universities. I now turn to the endowed universities, which are supported and governed independently of church and state alike.

## ENDOWED UNIVERSITIES.

The advocates and supporters of this form of university organization are as a rule deeply impressed with the disadvantages not only of denominational but also of state universities. Confining attention to the latter they would emphasize the danger of "political" appointments and control, the consequent abridgement of professorial liberty and the lowering of the intellectual tone and vitality of the institution. The analysis I have already made shows that there is much exaggeration in these criticisms. And experience proves that as our states outgrow the perilous period of callow youth they quickly discover that their universities must be kept out of the sphere of practical politics. None of the larger state universities are today affected with that virus. In one or two state universities there have recently been political scandals, but these have been in new states which are making, as all new states do, that first, and apparently inevitable, attempt to treat the universities as political spoils. I venture to say, however, that the way the American public has treated this debauch is likely to prevent its recurrence even in those new states. For the rest I am persuaded that the state universities in general have little or no ground to apprehend political appointments or political control. The only real danger I see is the danger I have already described. Yet even this danger must not be exaggerated. For there is a good deal of evidence to show that the people will tax themselves to support their universities, even when those universities teach doctrines in economics, politics, sociology, biology, or philosophy, which the people may think subversive of the dearest interests of mankind, both in the life of the individual and the life of the family and of society and of the state. The people are on such occasions perplexed, they are dissatisfied, they are even irritated; but in the end they recognize that these matters must be left to the experts, and that, as truth is of God, it is

vain on the one hand to defy it and foolish on the other to fear it can be overcome with error.

It cannot be denied, however, that a university with a private endowment is *in this respect* in a better position than a university which lives on annual legislative appropriations. Whatever its professors teach or publish, the university has no occasion to apprehend the revenge of an outraged public in the form of diminished revenues. Its funds are invested, and the rate of interest is not affected by the discoveries or publications of its professors. Be their views in economics or philosophy orthodox or heretical, the returns from investments in stocks, bonds, or mortgages are neither augmented nor diminished. And the advantage of owning funds, which by prudent investment produce an annual revenue that may be assuredly counted on in any contingency, is one that cannot easily be exaggerated. There is a feeling of absolute security which I suppose can scarcely ever exist in a state university though there is an approximation to it in the case of state universities when a legislative appropriation has been long established or when under the state constitution the university receives a fixed proportion of the revenues of the state.

#### INFLUENCE OF DONORS.

Is an endowed university, however, under any less temptation to truckle to public opinion than a state university? It is true that an endowed university has its annual income assured for the present, while a state university might have its income reduced by an irate legislature backed by an outraged public opinion. But universities are constantly growing, and they need more material support. The independent university must trust to the benevolence of men and women of means and philanthropic impulses. If the managers of state universities must take account of the sentiments of legislators and voters, are not the trustees of endowed universities under temptation to consult the feelings and prejudices of millionaires and



philanthropists? Is not the situation really identical for both classes of universities? They need and must have financial support from outside sources; yet neither directly nor indirectly must these holders of the purse strings influence the work and life, the teaching and investigation of those specialists who are set apart for the discovery and communication of truth. From one point of view indeed it might be said that the case was a little worse for the endowed universities. They depend on the charity of a certain small class of the community—the rich and generous. But the state universities are supported from the contributions made to the public treasury by all the citizens and residents of the state. From this difference has arisen the suspicion in certain quarters—especially I think among the laboring classes—that the privately endowed universities are the creatures and organs of capital. The aspersion is as cruel as it is unjust. Nothing could be more unfortunate for an institution consecrated to knowledge and truth than the suspicion that its work was not wholly disinterested, its investigations not absolutely unbiased, its teachings not purely the rational extraction of fact and evidence. Yet baseless as this accusation must in the main be pronounced to be, an appearance of subservience to capitalistic interests can always be plausibly made out against universities which derive from that source the means for their material support or expansion. Because the privately endowed universities live on the gifts which the rich or well-to-do bestow upon them, it is easy for the unreflecting and especially for the prejudiced to charge that they serve their benefactors even at the expense of truth and honesty. The one conclusive reply is an appeal to facts, an appeal to the history of endowed colleges and universities which have been in existence for generations and centuries. Whatever possibilities of danger may lie in their organization and especially in their mode of support, that history conclusively demonstrates that the privately endowed university has not

bartered the holy spirit of truth for gifts and legacies of money. They have not fought against the tyranny of church and state to sell themselves in slavery to Mammon.

I have, however, already indicated the danger to which the privately endowed universities are exposed. As the state universities are tempted to conciliate public opinion, which controls legislative appropriations so the privately endowed universities, which are ambitious to expand and develop, are tempted to attract the favorable attention of the wealthy classes to whom they look for endowment. In both cases the end may be accomplished by means which are honorable and dignified. But in both cases also there are possibilities of an opposite kind. To the best of my knowledge and belief, however, the presidents and responsible managers of our best known endowed universities (and it is these only I am now considering) seek support for their institutions by striving to make them efficient and realizing the intellectual leadership which is their true vocation. No other course is open to honorable and self-respecting gentlemen and scholars. And such a course—the true course for every university to follow—may appeal to men of wealth who are seeking philanthropic investments for capital more effectively than impassioned defenses of corporations or fierce attacks on radicals or any other blatant championship of vested interests and the rights of property. Rich men know that a university is an organ of the intellectual life. And most of those who use their money for educational purposes are large-minded enough to support universities which are devotedly fulfilling that function, whether they like or dislike the teachings of this, that, or the other individual professor.

The direct influence of benefactors on the administration and control of our universities has not been large. They have as a rule made their gifts and gone their way, leaving the administration of their funds in the hands of the institution. This fact should be carefully considered by those critics who assert that

the privately endowed universities are controlled by capital. The one conspicuous exception to this rule is the practice of founders of colleges and universities. They are apt to regard the institutions they have established as their own personal property. And during their life-time, as very recent examples remind us, these institutions may lack the freedom and independence which are essential to the life of a genuine university. Going back a generation I may say that no university founder ever interfered less with the institution he established than Ezra Cornell. Yet Goldwin Smith, who came to the new university, fresh from Oxford, was moved to observe that the proper place for college founders was in marble effigy in the college chapel!

#### CORPORATIONS AS ALMONERS.

Benefactors die; universities abide. At least that has been the case in the past. But in this age of organization, benefactors have learned to perpetuate themselves as corporations. And we now have institutions chartered by acts of congress to disburse for educational purposes the charities of millionaires. The rich philanthropist, who objectifies himself in such a benevolent corporation, of course names the trustees; and subsequent vacancies in the board are filled by co-optation. This is a new species of corporation; but the two or three already organized hold large funds, which are likely to be greatly augmented in the future. And there is no limit to the number of such corporations except the limit to the number of persons who possess wealth and desire to distribute it in this fashion.

A corporation of this kind is a distributing agency for wealth set apart for educational purposes. It can make investigations into applications which the rich philanthropist has not the time even to read. It can consider the circumstances of institutions and determine which in the public interest should be fostered and which should be left to languish and die among



the throng that has been created by the vanity of individuals or the ambition and rivalry of religious sects or civil communities. It can also raise the tone of education in an institution by making its gifts dependent on the attainment of certain standards. It may make appropriations for research or provide salaries for the support of professors of extraordinary ability either as investigators or as teachers. It may provide pensions for professors who are old or disabled. It may found scholarships for the education of talented youths who are to become teachers in the secondary schools. It may do anything and everything that tends to create an efficient system of state or national education.

It is a large field which is open to these corporate organizations of educational beneficence. Where the public schools are concerned, the trustees of the corporation undoubtedly work in harmony with (and perhaps under the supervision of) the educational authorities of the state. As to the state universities I believe these corporations have had no relation with them except that the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has admitted them to the benefits of its professorial pension fund. The work and influence of these benevolent organizations essentially exhausts itself on the privately endowed and the denominational colleges and universities.

#### DANGER TO UNIVERSITY INDEPENDENCE.

I cannot but think that they create a new and dangerous situation for the independent and privately endowed universities. Just in proportion as these are supported by those benevolent corporations is their centre of gravity thrown outside themselves. It is no longer the case of a rich man giving his money, going his way (eventually dying), and leaving the university free to manage its own affairs. The purse strings are now controlled by an immortal power, which makes it its business to investigate and supervise and which lays down conditions that the university must accept if it is to receive

grants of money. An irresponsible, self-perpetuating board, whose business is to dispense money, necessarily tends to look at every question from the pecuniary point of view; it wants its money's worth; it demands immediate and tangible results. Will not its large powers and enormous influence in relation to the institutions dependent upon it tend to develop in it an attitude of patronage and a habit of meddling? The very ambition of such a corporation to reform educational abuses is itself a source of danger. Men are not constituted educational reformers by having millions to spend. And, indeed, an irresponsible, self-perpetuating board of this sort may become a real menace to the best interests of the higher education. In the fancied interests of capital, of religion, or of education itself, it may galvanize the intellectual life of the institution it undertakes to foster. A board of this kind should be answerable to the public, like the regents of a state university. Or, better still, let the millionaire trust the boards of trustees of colleges and universities and give them outright the capital he intends to devote to educational purposes. I believe that in all cases this plan would be best for education and best for the public interest. I make no exception even of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to which Mr. Carnegie has given such large endowment for the pensioning of professors in the colleges, technical schools, and universities of the United States and Canada. And I certainly speak with no prejudice as I regard that endowment as the best thing any benefactor has ever done for higher education in America, and I have myself the honor of being one of the trustees. But I look with concern and anxiety on the influence of such corporations on the free and independent life of our institutions of learning and research.

#### GOVERNMENT OF ENDOWED UNIVERSITIES.

Privately endowed universities are governed by boards of trustees who as a rule elect their own members. Some of them

make provision also for alumni representation on the board. In the main, however, they are self-perpetuating corporations. A board so constituted tends to develop a uniform complexion. It is composed of the same type of men, selected from the same class of society, having the same intellectual outlook and interests. They will be lawyers, or doctors, or educated men of business. No farmer, no labor man will have a seat on the board, though the farm and the factory have scientific interests and there are farmers and wage-earners who are wise councilors and prudent administrators. In comparison with the governing board of a state university, the governing board of an endowed university may be described as lacking comprehensiveness of outlook and interest. The one board represents the people of the state, and takes account of the intellectual life and the scientific problems of all the people; the other at best represents a portion of the people and a section of their intellectual interests. This is not saying that the governing board of an endowed university may not have as able and devoted members as the regents of a state university. They may be more able and more devoted. But the governing board of the state university has the great advantage of representing the people of the state, whose diversified, intellectual interests it appreciates and serves, while the governing board of the endowed university has no such representative character or comprehensive function.

Apart from this limitation, however, the trustees of the endowed university, who are selected by co-optation or by vote of the alumni, ordinarily make excellent public servants. The mode of selection tends to secure picked men. And as they are generally re-elected on the expiration of their term of office, they become the depositories of a valuable experience and the exponents of a practical wisdom begotten of such experience. Those of them who are elected by the alumni are apt to have also a special understanding of the educational

and scientific work of the university. Altogether I should say that so long as we have endowed universities of the character of our oldest seats of learning, so long will they be governed by boards whose members are chosen by co-optation or by vote of the alumni.

#### CORNELL UNIVERSITY BOARD.

Hitherto we have had no university governed by a board whose membership was determined by all three methods of selection—by state appointment, by the vote of the alumni, and by the choice of the board itself. Last winter, however, the legislature of the State of New York amended the charter of Cornell University, with the full approval of the board of trustees, so as to provide for such a constitution of the board. Cornell University was, I believe, the first university in America to give representation to the alumni on the board of trustees. Hitherto of six trustees elected annually for a term of five years two have been elected by the alumni and four by the board. The act just referred to, while leaving the governor and other high state officers trustees of the university *ex-officio*, provides that one of the trustees hitherto elected annually by the board shall hereafter be appointed by the governor of the state with the advice and consent of the senate. The next step may be to have two of the six trustees appointed annually by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate, leaving two to be elected by the board and two, as now, to be chosen by the alumni; and eventually the State might claim even a still larger measure of control. In the meantime, however, there will be opportunity to see how the scheme works. It is certainly an interesting departure, and, as I think, a very hopeful one. And it responds to the actual situation at Cornell University. For the State of New York, which less than twenty years ago had never given a cent to Cornell University, now makes large and increasing appropriation for the

maintenance of its educational work; and with this State participation in the support of the University should go State participation in its administration and control.

#### UNIVERSITY SERVICE TO STATE.

A university which has an organic connection with the state possesses not only the advantage of state support. It has the privilege and the duty of serving the state. Of course its service is rigidly limited to the educational, scholarly, and scientific interests of the state. But in these days those interests are very extensive and very diversified. One of the most important is the provision of teachers for the high schools and normal schools of the state. This function is likely to increase in importance with every passing year. Our secondary and elementary schools are inferior to similar schools in France and Germany. To make them more thorough and efficient we need better teachers. There is no other remedy. And better teachers will be demanded, just as soon as communities discover that this is the only way to reform. These teachers must for the high schools be furnished by the universities. And a state university, which is the crown and climax of the educational system of the state, has in these circumstances a unique opportunity and privilege which any privately endowed university must envy. Even the privately endowed university, however, may share in this splendid work. And it is its misfortune—I will not say its fault—if among its graduates there is not a considerable number who intend to devote themselves to the teaching profession. Certainly there is an obligation incumbent on the state universities to educate teachers for the schools and to create and intensify enthusiasm for the teaching profession. From the point of view of the public, this is quite as important as graduating lawyers, physicians, or clergymen.

But a state university will not content itself with any object short of the entirety of educational, scholarly, and scientific



interests of the state. It has in this respect an advantage over the privately endowed university—an advantage reflected in the constitution of the governing board, to which I have already referred. The scope of the privately endowed university is narrower, its programme less diversified, than that of the state university. It is in the state universities that the scientific and intellectual interests of the community are reflected in their entirety. As these universities are dependent on the people as a whole for their support they are sensitive to the intellectual needs of the people wherever and whenever they arise. There is no work, no calling, no human activity too humble for their consideration, if only science or knowledge can be of use in it. On the other hand as the people support the university no section of the community will tolerate the neglect of its peculiar problems. Hence it is that the state universities have such a multiplicity of departments and comprehensiveness of curriculum. Their province is the totality of human knowledge and its application to the life and work and vocations of mankind. Agriculture is cultivated side by side with law and the mechanic arts with medicine. The action and reaction of a university and the people of the state upon each other is mutually advantageous. Of course the people are aided and elevated by knowledge. But it is also an advantage to the university to be kept in close touch with concrete scientific problems and with knowledge that is useful; the university is thereby saved from scholasticism and barrenness. It may be said that this work is utilitarian. But if so, it is utilitarianism which is characterized by intellectual service to mankind. A more serious objection would be that this activity of the university in practical spheres might atrophy the wings of reason and keep it from soaring into the heights of speculation. That, however, is an indictment which De Tocqueville brought against American democracy before the state university came into existence. And it should be noticed

that the activity which the state universities exhibit in practical affairs, like farming and engineering, is itself a theoretical and rational activity. And I see no reason why facts concerning crops, stock, railways, and factories should not be as stimulating to pure reason as any other groups of facts. Certainly Darwin, the greatest scientific speculator since Newton, took as the starting-point of his theories the data gathered by gardeners and stock-breeders.

### STATE UNIVERSITIES AND DEMOCRACY.

The attitude of our people towards their state universities is a sublime and encouraging spectacle. It is, however, as wise and far-sighted as it is touching and impressive. For the life of states, like the life of individuals, is dependent on foresight, and foresight is the counterpart of that exact and systematic knowledge which we call Science, of which the university is the organ and work-shop. The best guides and the chief helpers of the community are not the politicians and financiers, who fill the public eye, but the scholars and the scientists. The universities are to a nation what eyes are to an animal. And since in our Republic the federal government has nothing to do with education it devolves on the states to supply the universities. Their origin and support can no longer in the United States be left to the caprice and uncertainty of private generosity, helpful as that generosity may be. Education from the elementary school to the university is the concern of the state. The majority of our states have recognized this obligation and provided state universities. The West has led, but the East is following. And before many years a state without a state university will be an anomaly in our Union. For the rest I assert most emphatically that a state university is an indispensable organ of genuine democracy.

I turn now from the organization and control of universities to their members and functions.

### WORK OF AMERICAN PROFESSORS.

The professors in American universities have a pedagogical function to discharge which in Europe falls to the teachers in the gymnasium or the lycée. This is not their only function, but it is an addition to their other duties, which resemble those of German or French university professors. The difference is due to the inferiority of our high schools when compared with the secondary schools of the most advanced countries in Europe. In the latter the period of drill on the part of the teacher and of assimilative intellectual reaction and discipline on the part of the scholar are completed before the boys pass their leaving examinations and qualify for admission to the university. With us in the United States boys do not reach this stage much before the close of the second year in the university. The work, therefore, of the professors of the liberal arts and sciences in our universities is during the freshman and sophomore years essentially the drill-work of the German gymnasium. I have said this is what the work *is*; it would be more correct to say this is what the work *ought to be*. For many of our professors, who have been trained in German universities, fail to recognize the actual condition of affairs at home, and lecture to callow and untrained freshmen, or even introduce them into methods of original research, as though they already possessed a knowledge to which they are strangers or a mental discipline which they have had no opportunity of acquiring. I consider it a matter of cardinal importance in the higher education of the United States that this National Association of State Universities has drawn a sharp distinction between the work of the freshman and sophomore years and the subsequent work of our university students.

### BETTER TEACHING DEMANDED.

Two other steps, however, remain to be taken in the interests of higher education. First the individual universities of this



Association must see that their freshmen and sophomores are thoroughly drilled—drilled as they were in former days by those inexorable teachers of mathematics and Latin or Greek. This is the remedy for the atrocious intellectual slovenliness, inaccuracy, and vagueness which today characterize pupils in all American schools, colleges, and universities. As in so many other cases reform must begin from above; it is for the universities to react on the high schools and normal schools and through them on the elementary schools. And it is in the freshman and sophomore years that the university has the opportunity and the duty of performing this high task and setting the shining example. Especially is the obligation incumbent on the universities embraced in this Association which has already formally recognized that the work of the first two years differs in aim and method from that of the subsequent years of the student's course, being a continuation of the drill work of the preparatory school with a beginning if possible of the freely determined activity of the scholar and investigator.

#### **CURRICULUM FOR UNDER-CLASSMEN.**

The second task to which not only the individual universities but especially this National Association of State Universities must address themselves is the establishment of a curriculum for freshmen and sophomores in place of the old New England curriculum which has gone and the no-curriculum of the elective system which experience has proved a worse substitute. I regard this matter as one of the most urgent problems now before our universities. It cannot be settled for the Nation by any one institution, but it can, I believe, be settled by this Association representing the universities of the several states. What we do in this matter, if we can reach a unanimous conclusion, would, I have little doubt, be adopted by the Nation. And think what vast interests are involved. It is nothing less than the displacement of the chaos which now reigns supreme, not only in our universities and colleges, but

in our high schools and academies by a curriculum of study based on sound pedagogical principles and adapted to the spirit and needs of twentieth century civilization. I admit that the task is one of colossal difficulty. But that is no reason why it should not be undertaken. Difficulties exist to try the spirit of men.

The general indifference of the faculties of our universities to this problem is due, I believe, to that exclusive absorption in departmental interests which the elective system has developed amongst us. The professor tends to look at all educational questions from the point of view of his own subject, his own classes, his own laboratory or seminary. A visitor from Mars investigating our universities might suspect that students existed for the sake of the professor's specialty. What studies are best for the student and at what age, are themes seldom discussed and rarely thought of. Yet, in spite of research and in spite of service to the community, it is still true that universities exist for the sake of students. And the time has come for a reaction in favor of the student's interests. We must face and settle the question what subjects should be studied by freshmen and sophomores who according to the formal declaration of this Association cannot, like upperclassmen and graduates, be left free to elect their own courses and to engage in specialization or investigation.

#### **SUBJECTS SUGGESTED.**

If the problem were once seriously faced, it might turn out that there would be much more probability of agreement than could have existed some years ago, prior to experience with the elective system. Some things have in the meantime settled themselves. Greek, for instance, will never again be prescribed in American universities; for general educational purposes (while its incomparable literature will always have audience fit though few) it has gone the way of Hebrew, which like Greek, was once prescribed for the A. B. degree. In a

generation, a century, or a millenium, Latin may follow it; but at present Latin is a potent and widely diffused factor in our civilization. It is an accident that two foreign languages have so long been prescribed for educated men. Shall we in the future have only one? I suppose most persons would say at least one foreign language was necessary, holding with Goethe that the man who knows only his own language does not know even that. Shall the foreign language be Latin, or German, or French, or Spanish? In Europe practical necessities—trade, travel, intercourse, etc.—foster the acquisition of foreign languages. These considerations would with us give the preference to German and Spanish. Yet our graduates, who are to become scholars and scientists, will continue to need German and French as the tools of their vocation.

Probably every one will assent to the proposition that the English language and literature and our own national history should be the centre of humanistic studies of the high school and that they should be continued in the freshman and sophomore years of the university. Nor would there perhaps be much difference of opinion about the place to be occupied by mathematics. The war against science is over; and the value of science as educational material is fully recognized, even though few educators, if any, would, like Herbert Spencer, make it the be-all and end-all of education.

But if courses in English language and literature, in history and politics, in Latin or German or both, in mathematics and physical science, were laid out for freshmen and sophomores, and taught by methods of instruction adapted to freshmen and sophomores and by professors distinguished for pedagogical skill and thoroughness and possessed of personalities with a contagious power of sympathy, friendship, and inspiration,—what a reform would be effected in our higher education and how quickly it would spread through all grades of our institutions of learning!

## TEACHERS AND INVESTIGATORS.

The all-essential factor in this reform is the teacher. Our universities, and especially the state universities, have in recent years been over-run with students; and the problem of providing for their instruction has not yet been satisfactorily solved. The embarrassment is felt most in the underclasses, in which the augmentation of members is especially marked. Generally, this increasing demand for instruction has been met by dividing the classes into sections and assigning the sections to tutors or instructors. Thus it results that young students who need the best teaching an institution can command are turned over to inexperienced young men, fresh from the laboratory and seminary, interested in research, and begrudging the time taken from it by what they feel the drudgery of teaching and drilling pupils ignorant of the very elements of the subject in which they themselves live and move and have their being. Now this situation illustrates the need of two classes of university professors,—the one preeminent as teachers the other as investigators, though of course the teachers should not neglect scholarship and research nor the investigators be exempt from the duty of teaching. So long as our American universities retain the work now done in the freshman and sophomore years—and I see very little prospect of our public high schools being able to undertake it—so long must they have in their faculties professors who are teachers, drillmasters, and inspirers of youth as well as professors who are investigators and enlargers of knowledge. It is no use shutting our eyes to actual facts because we wish them otherwise. The German university professor is not the intellectual guide needed by our freshmen and sophomores; it is rather the teacher in the German Gynnasium. And it is the duty of our universities, and especially of the state universities which have differentiated so markedly the work of the freshman and sophomore years and the later years of the course, to provide their underclassmen

with the kind of teachers they actually need. And we must see to it that in dignity, in emolument, and in public esteem the cultured and inspiring teacher of underclassmen shall enjoy equal standing with the specialist and investigator whose dearest ambition is, not so much the training of youth, as the enlargement of knowledge.

The other reform needed in the faculties of our universities has to do with research and investigation. My complaint is that we do not today sufficiently differentiate the functions which our universities are discharging. We are apparently willing that everybody should do everything. But the ideal surely is that the work to be done should be done by those who are competent to do it, and on the other hand that each should do the work for which he is peculiarly fitted. Our universities are devoted to teaching and to investigation. These functions will not be properly discharged if the man whom nature ordained for the high function of teaching is kept in the laboratory or the man who has a thirst for new knowledge and might create it is exhausted in the classroom. I have already said that our underclassmen are entitled to better teachers. Teaching is the primary and fundamental function of the university; and the good teacher is second to no other member of the faculty. But research has in modern times come to be an important function of the university, and it becomes more important with every passing year. The scientist and scholar who explore for us the secrets of nature or the history of mankind have come to be recognized as the chief benefactors of our race. Human life is a struggle and a process of adaptation; we succeed in living in proportion as we know ourselves and the environment that conditions us. The light to our feet and the lamp to our path is that exact and systematized knowledge we call science, by the aid of which we recall the past, predict the future, and make ourselves at home with the forces of the universe.



## APPEAL FOR RESEARCH PROFESSORS.

Research is a highly specialized function. It is not the calling of every university professor, though experience in interrogating nature even when she makes no reply may be a good discipline for every educated man. But research as a vocation is the privilege of the few who are specially qualified for that creative function. In an ideally organized university a profesor thus endowed by nature would be set apart to his high calling. The experience of European universities seems to show, however, that it helps, rather than hinders, the investigator, if he also does some teaching. I cite the cases of Kelvin, of Helmholtz, of Pasteur. The trouble with us in America is that we overwhelm the investigator with teaching. His energies are exhausted in the classroom; and when he escapes to his laboratory no inspiration comes to his wearied faculties. We are ready, especially in the state universities, to build him laboratories and to buy him apparatus, and even to furnish him with assistance. We have yet to learn that research demands the man himself, in all the freshness and plenitude of his energies. And the next step in the development of our universities will be the establishment of research professorships, in connection with which teaching will be a subordinate and ancillary function. Such chairs already exist in some of our agricultural departments and in one at least of our medical schools. They will eventually be established in all the great fields of scientific inquiry. And when they come it will be for us to see that none shall occupy them but professors having the genuine afflatus of scientific discovery—knight-errants of the holy spirit of truth. A score of such professorships in each of a dozen of the strongest universities in the United States would do more than any other reform whatever to put American universities on the same plane as those of Germany. But 250 research professors at a salary of \$8,000 would call for only \$2,000,000 a year, and if to that be

added another \$2,000,000 for assistants and facilities for research, the total would not exceed \$4,000,000 a year. This is a small sum for a nation so rich as ours to spend on any special object and a mere bagatelle for it to invest in the development of brains and the discovery of knowledge which have always constituted true national greatness and which nowadays also infallibly produce national prosperity and efficiency. In the name of science and in the name of statesmanship I appeal to our millionaires and to our legislatures to inaugurate this sublime and fruitful work of scientific research on a scale worthy of our great and rich republic. We hear it stated with somewhat tiresome monotony that the United States has at last become a "world-power." Well, as Bacon said, knowledge is power. And the only genuine way to become a world-power is to rival the foremost nations of the world in the discovery of new knowledge. This the United States cannot do till its universities become active centres of original investigation like the universities of Germany. And for this development of our universities professorships devoted to research—and a goodly number of them—are the indispensable condition.

#### FREE TUITION FOR STUDENTS.

I come now to the students of our universities. Their numbers in recent years have been greatly increased. In part this is due to the general diffusion of prosperity throughout the country, which has provided funds available for the higher education of young men and women, and in part to the inexpensiveness of education at the state universities, in which no charge is made for tuition. I believe that in a democracy the highest education like the lowest should be accessible to all classes of the people, without money and without price. The laws governing the bequest and inheritance of property inevitably tend to create an aristocracy of wealth. It is all the more imperative, therefore, that we should fight every policy and arrangement which tends to develop an aristocracy

of intellect supported by, and allied with, that aristocracy of wealth. But every dollar charged for higher education makes for the development and consideration of such an alliance. It is not free choice, it is the necessity laid upon them, which has led the privately endowed universities to make a charge for tuition (apart altogether from laboratory and other fees) of from \$100 to \$250 a year. These universities must have funds to do their work, and if gifts and legacies are wanting there is no other source of revenue but receipts from students. I recognize the necessity. But it is none the less deplorable and calamitous. For these high fees are barriers which the privately endowed universities set up against students who have little or no means to spend on education. By this policy those universities tend to limit their services to certain classes of the community—to the rich, prosperous, or well-to-do. They establish an artificial selection of students by standards which are neither educational nor intellectual, but purely pecuniary.

\* Of course the tendency I am describing may to some extent be overcome by loan-funds, scholarships, and the like. But the amount of this aid for students is quite limited; and if it is given the student feels himself an object of charity, while if it is lent he has the obligation to repay it at a later time. Altogether it is a very inadequate and very unsatisfactory substitute for the free tuition which prevails at the state universities. Of course it will be said by the prosperous optimist that if a young man wants a college education he should pay for it and if he is of the "right stuff" he will not fail in his ambition. But the first contention is undermined by the practice of our elementary and high schools which give free education; and it is not possible in this respect to draw a line between them and the universities. And as to the possibility of poor youth of ability and ambition earning money to pay tuition fees it would be more correct to say that while



some can and will others cannot and for all it substantially increases the difficulty of obtaining a higher education.

But this is not a matter of mere individual gain or loss. It is an issue of vast social and national significance. Society is profoundly concerned in the education and training of its most highly endowed members. The progress of our nation depends upon the educated brains of individuals. We must discover our most richly gifted youth and give them all the training our universities can offer. To this end we should make their access to the universities as easy as possible. The state universities smooth their way; the high charges for tuition are so many barriers about the privately endowed universities. The state universities are, therefore, not merely more democratic than the privately endowed universities, they will also prove more fruitful agencies for maintaining the intellectual vitality and promoting the intellectual progress of the American people.

#### HIGH STANDARDS AND HARD WORK.

The privilege of free tuition which the tax-payers bestow upon students in the state universities imposes a corresponding obligation upon the students and upon the universities. The purpose of this provision is the higher education of the best minds of the rising generation. The university is not intended for persons deficient in brains nor yet for persons who, though well endowed mentally, refuse to devote themselves to study. The university is a place of study for capable and diligent students. And the authorities of a state university, for which the public tax themselves to maintain free tuition, are under special obligation to realize this ideal. Laxness in the enforcement of intellectual and scholastic standards in a state university is especially unpardonable. Even when the tax-payers themselves think of numbers rather than of standards, the faculty of the university must not be seduced from the plain

path of duty by that delusion. And students, who are the objects of so much public sacrifice, are under special obligation to do their duty, to make the most of the high privilege conferred upon them, and to fit themselves to become intellectual guides and leaders of the community.

I believe that the hardest working students in America are today found in the universities embraced in this Association. The prestige of our venerable endowed universities attracts to them, not only workers, but idlers—the youth sent by ambitious parents for social purposes rather than for study or education. This influx of young men, who are averse to intellectual work and contemptuous of the scholarly life, creates special problems for the universities which they frequent. Whether the state universities will in the future attract a similar class of students I do not venture to predict. Today they certainly do not. Of course the prestige of the old universities enures to the advantage of the state universities. But the migration of the drones is not the only reason why their students are hard workers. These young men and women come from homes in the country and in small villages where the higher education is greatly appreciated, partly no doubt because of its rarity. Then the university offers them the sort of education they want for their work in life, so that their interests are enlisted at the outset. Every calling which has an intellectual or scientific basis is represented in the faculty of the university. It is a great democratic nursery of future farmers, mechanics, engineers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, clergymen, writers, scholars, and scientists. And, speaking generally, each student devotes himself to his own field of work with the zeal and earnestness which are to characterize him in his subsequent vocation.

#### OUTSIDE DISTRACTIONS.

There is, however, one qualification to be made to this general statement. If our state universities are attended by serious-

minded, hard-working students, it must be admitted that for the sake of the so-called "student activities" they will at special seasons sacrifice the studies of the curriculum almost as readily, if not as generally, as the students of the famous old endowed universities. These extra-curriculum activities have become in the last decade or two a serious menace to the real functions of our universities, state and endowed alike. In themselves considered these so-called "student activities" are proper and it may be even laudable. They embrace football, baseball, rowing, and track athletics, besides basketball, tennis, golf, cross-country running, fencing, and other minor sports. But the students' extraneous activities are not limited to athletics; they extend beyond the physical nature of man; they are exerted in journalism and music and the drama, in politics and morals and religion, in receptions and dances and celebrations and other social functions innumerable. For all these objects, as varied as the interests of human life, there are organizations to be formed and maintained, meetings to be held, business to be conducted, service often heavy and long-continued to be performed by adepts, and exhibitions to be given not only at home but in other places often hundreds of miles away.

I need not point out, though the fact escapes general attention save in the case of football, that these outside activities absorb the time and interests of the students who participate in them to the detriment of that intellectual training and education for the sake of which they presumably came to the university. It is no relief to the situation to point out that such students derive a valuable experience from these non-academic pursuits. Undoubtedly they do. But the university does not exist for the sake of the "side-shows" that can be grouped about its hospitable campus. They are mere phenomena or even epiphenomena that play about that vital and essential reality which we call the university. To substitute them for it is to glorify the shadow as the substance.

The university is an institution for the training of mind through intellectual discipline by competent masters. If the university does not serve this function I see little use in preserving the institution. As a mere centre and occasion of non-academic "student activities," it would exhibit a monstrous perversion of ends, to say nothing of monumental folly and wastefulness. The work to which the university is called is the highest and noblest known to modern civilization. *Optimi corruptio pessima*. We must hold our universities up to their high ideal. And the task, once the danger that threatens them is fully realized, is not so difficult as it appears. All that is needed is the establishment of high educational standards and the enforcement of these requirements on all classes of students. Let the youth by all means have his physical and social recreation; for physical and social recreation is essential to his well-being and to freshness and vigor of mind; but let him practice the Hellenic precept of moderation, and let him subordinate everything else to that intellectual discipline and education for the sake of which the true student comes to the university and for the sake of which alone the university exists.

#### THE STUDENT HERO.

Is our ideal then of the student to be that entity whom his comrades, with significant and tell-tale opprobrium, designate the "grind" or even the "greasy grind"? This question is a real challenge to the faculties of our universities. The students make a hero of the man who excels in non-academic "student activities," especially in athletics. Who is *our* hero? Have we none? Or does it seem a matter of no moment? Shall the athlete, or the singer, or the player be thrust into the place of honor by his admiring fellow-students while their teachers maintain an approving silence? Has not the time come to proclaim that *the able and hard-working student—he is the hero of the university*. For a hundred gifted youth who strenuously devote themselves to their studies our universities might well

spare a thousand mediocre men, good fellows though they be, to whom study is a weariness of the flesh and distinction in "student activities" the be-all and end-all of the college course.

I believe the time is ripe for a formal recognition of high scholarship on the part of our faculties. At Oxford and Cambridge students are divided into "pass" and "honor" men, the former numbered by thousands, the latter by hundreds. And in Germany a radical distinction is made between the pass degree and the degree *magna cum laude* or *summa cum laude*, the latter of which is obtained by only a small number of graduates. To these distinguished graduates the best things are open both in Germany and in Britain. With us in the United States, speaking generally, all degrees of the same denomination conferred by a university have the same value. The result is that our degrees are held in little esteem by the public. Could we not reinstate them in public estimation and at the same time invest our real scholars with appropriate honors by making some such distinction between our students as that connoted by "pass" and "honor" men in the old universities of England? And would not this change lead to a further differentiation in the work of our faculties, which today is one of the greatest needs of our universities? Qualitative differences exist between students; let them be frankly recognized, and the work adjusted accordingly—and the honors, too.

#### LIBERAL CULTURE.

So far I have treated the university as a single unit. What I have been saying applies to the institution as a whole, though some remarks may be more applicable to one division of it than to others. I desire at this point, however, to separate for special consideration the college of liberal arts. The successful work of the professional, technical, and vocational schools in our best universities is now universally recognized. But the indictment is brought against those same universities,



and especially the state universities, that they have not been successful organs of liberal culture. This is the end to which the old-fashioned New England college directed its energies. The means it employed was the use of a restricted circle of studies which, it is claimed, were without practical bearing, which neither fitted young men to earn their livelihood or to practice a profession. These studies were called "liberal," to mark them off from practical or useful subjects. And the capable student who pursued them assiduously reached that intangible but real goal known as liberal culture. In the best sense of the term, he was a liberally educated man. He was steeped in the best thought and culture of his time; and not only was his reason trained, but his imagination had been quickened and his taste elevated and refined.

The disciplines which produced this result were the Greek and Latin languages and literatures, mathematics, physics, rhetoric, logic, and philosophy. There may have been some other minor subjects, but these were the staple of that old curriculum. As will be seen it consisted of literature, science, and philosophy. The emphasis was laid on literature, the lightest stress was put on science.

Now in connection with that programme and its results two observations must be made. In the first place the college course, in spite of all that has been said regarding its practical uselessness, was an excellent preparation for the two great learned professions of the day—namely, the professions of theology and law, in which literary, rhetorical, and argumentative training was then of fundamental importance; and the student who had completed the course could earn a livelihood by teaching school while he prepared himself, wholly or in part, to enter one of those professions. Again, if the curriculum of a modern college of liberal arts does not give to literature the preponderance which it held in the older scheme of studies, it nevertheless gives ample place to other important humanistic

studies, such as history, economics, and politics. And it provides more generously for physical science, which by its insistence on fact and verified theory has created for our generation a new type of intellectual civilization.

#### CHANGES IN THE COLLEGE.

Let us frankly admit that the college of liberal arts, whether as a division in the university or a separate organization, has been undergoing modification. It has been adjusting itself to modern civilization. If it lays less stress than formerly on a knowledge of the languages of ancient peoples—Hebrew, Greek, and even Latin—it lays far more stress on a knowledge of their history, institutions, ideas, and economical and political conditions and development. It recognizes, too, that the life and work of mankind did not cease to be interesting or instructive with the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. And especially does it find in our own national history and institutions and in the literature of our mother tongue educational material of the highest value, for which it may cite the warrant of the ancient Greeks, our exemplars of liberal culture, who knew no language, literature, and history but their own and even contemned everything foreign as barbarian. And then, as I have already intimated, a college of liberal arts would today be exceedingly illiberal which did not give its students some training in the methods and results of physical science, which, apart from its own specific achievements, has so profoundly modified our views, if not of man's nature, at any rate of his place in the universe and the course of his history on this planet. Lastly, the college of liberal arts today makes more of the fine arts—of music, painting, sculpture, and architecture—than at any previous period of its history.

There has been in our universities, state as well as endowed, a great increase in the number of liberal studies and some change of emphasis in their relative importance, but they remain

as of old, primarily, the humanities, and secondarily, the sciences. And our universities, state as well as endowed, recognize with the college of arts that the minds of the rising generation are to be humanized (and so liberalized) by a study of the humanities—the rational, spiritual, imaginative, moral, political, and institutional productions and creations of the human race. These embrace language, literature, art, philosophy, history, economics, and politics. To these must be added physical science, which is man's verified insight into the nature and operations of this material universe, which is the scene of his existence, the source of his physical energies, and, mayhap, the living garment of the Infinite Spirit, in whom he lives and moves and has his being.

#### THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE.

Is it worth while to pursue art, literature, philosophy, and science for their own sake, or apart from their usefulness in earning a livelihood, making money, or rising in a profession? It is not, if man is in this world merely to eat, drink, gather wealth, and try to get his head above his fellows. It assuredly is worth while—and this is the creed of all colleges and universities alike—if man is summoned to truth and beauty by voices nobler and not less commanding than those which bid him eat and drink and gratify his animal instincts. Disinterested devotion to truth and beauty, like unselfish goodness, rests on the final postulate that we are not on earth merely for the sake of living, but for the sake of noble living. This high conception of man is the meeting point of liberal culture with virtue and religion. And none of them can escape the shadow cast by the realistic aims of an age that worships money and physical power as they have not been worshipped since the days of the Roman Empire. All the more incumbent on our universities is it to foster the intellectual life and to proclaim that the things of the spirit are the real *summum bonum* both



for nations and for individuals. A state university which allowed its college of liberal arts to languish, which was faithless to the call of liberal culture, would have destroyed the nerve of its own highest life and activity, while it abandoned the most precious heritage of the civilization of mankind. "The love of knowledge for its own sake," says Locke, "is the principal part of human perfection, and the seed-plot of all the virtues."

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